

Week Ending Friday, December 27, 2002

The President's Radio Address

December 21, 2002

Good morning. As families across the Nation gather to celebrate Christmas, Laura and I want to extend our best wishes for the holidays. We hope that this Christmas will be a time of happiness in your home and a time of peace in the world.

In this season, we celebrate with our families and deeply miss loved ones who are no longer with us. Thousands of families in our Nation are still grieving over the terrible losses that came to them last year on September the 11th. We have not forgotten their loss, and we continue to pray for their comfort.

The Christmas season brings a deeper concern for fellow citizens in need. Our country is prosperous; yet we must also remember there are pockets of despair in America. Some men and women are facing the struggles of illness and old age with no one to help them or pray with them. Other Americans fight against terrible addictions. Some young men have no family but a gang. Some teenage moms are abandoned and alone. And some children wonder if anybody loves them.

We all share a responsibility to help, both through our Government and through individual acts of compassion. In this season of giving, I hope all Americans will look for opportunities to donate and volunteer where the need is greatest. By reaching out to a neighbor in need, we make our country a more just and generous place.

Our entire Nation is also thinking at this time of year of the men and women in the military, many of whom will spend Christmas

at posts and bases far from home. They stand between Americans and grave danger. They serve in the cause of peace and freedom. They wear the uniform proudly, and we are so proud of them.

I have met with these idealistic young men and women across America and around the world. I know the sacrifices they make, and in every place they serve, they can know that they have the love of their families and the gratitude of their Nation.

At this time of year, we appreciate all the blessings that fill our lives, especially the great blessing that came on a holy night in Bethlehem. The Christmas story speaks to every generation. It is the story of a quiet birth in a little town on the margins of an indifferent empire; yet that single event set the direction of history and still changes millions of lives.

For over two millennia, Christmas has carried the message that God is with us, and because He is with us we can always live in hope. The world we live in is very different from the world of ancient Bethlehem. Our need for that hope is still unchanged. In all the challenges and dangers of our day, we still seek the promise of peace on Earth.

Thank you for listening, and Merry Christmas.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:05 p.m. on December 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Radio Remarks to the People of Iran*December 21, 2002*

I'm pleased to send warm greetings to the people of Iran and to welcome you to the new Radio Farda broadcast.

For many years, the United States has helped bring news and cultural broadcasts for a few hours every day to the Iranian people via Radio Freedom. Yet the Iranian people tell us that more broadcasting is needed, because the unelected few who control the Iranian Government continue to place severe restrictions on access to uncensored information. So we are now making our broadcast available to more Iranians by airing news and music and cultural programs nearly 24 hours a day, and we are pleased to continue Voice of America and VOA TV services to Iran.

The people of Iran want to build a freer, more prosperous country for their children and live in a country that is a full partner in the international community. Iranians also deserve a free press to express themselves to help build an open, democratic, and free society.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Iranian people, particularly the families of the many Iranians who are in prison today for daring to express their hopes and dreams for a better future. We continue to stand with the people of Iran in your quest for freedom, prosperity, honest and effective government, judicial due process, and the rule of law. And we continue to call on the Government of Iran to respect the will of its people and be accountable to them.

As I have said before, if Iran respects its international obligations and embraces freedom and tolerance, it will have no better friend than the United States of America.

Best wishes for a bright future filled with knowledge and information and freedom.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 1:15 p.m. on December 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later broadcast in Iran on Radio Farda. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 20.

Memorandum on the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth*December 20, 2002*

Memorandum for the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Education, the Director of National Drug Control Policy, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Assistant to the President and Director of the USA Freedom Corps, the Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service

Subject: White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth

An unacceptably large number of American youth fail each year to develop the academic, social, and citizenship skills necessary to succeed in our country. For example, 60 percent of fourth graders from low-income families cannot read at grade level, more than 2.6 million teens use illicit substances each month, and 400,000 teens commit violent crimes each year. Many of these young people grow up in economic and social environments that place them at a significant disadvantage.

The Federal Government has spent billions of dollars over the last 30 years in a variety of programs to address these issues. A 1998 analysis by the General Accounting Office has pointed out that there were 117 Federal programs administered by 15 departments aimed at disadvantaged youth. Some of these programs have been very successful. However, overall, the Federal Government's efforts and programs to assist disadvantaged young people have been fragmented and not as successful as hoped.

Consistent with my interest in improving the effectiveness of Federal programs in general, and in programs for disadvantaged